



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LAMAR MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO USING PIPE BOMB TO EXPLODE PICK-UP TRUCK

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Lamar, Mo., man pleaded guilty in federal court today to arson caused by exploding a pipe bomb. The bomb was wired to a pick-up truck in an unsuccessful murder attempt during a bitter child custody dispute, Graves added.

Arvon M. Swanberg, 67, of Lamar, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr this afternoon to the charge contained in an April 1, 2004, federal indictment.

Swanberg admitted that he was planning to kill Landon Hackler with the bomb on Oct. 28, 2000. Hackler was the ex-husband of **Swanberg's** wife (since divorced), Graves explained, with whom he was involved in a child custody dispute. **Swanberg** purchased some of the materials to make a pipe bomb at a local Hobby Lobby store and assisted in the construction of the pipe bomb, attaching it to the bottom of Hackler's 1993 Ford truck while it was parked at his place of employment.

The pipe bomb failed to operate properly, Graves said, so that Hackler suffered only back injury and hearing loss rather than death, but caused extensive damage to the truck.

Swanberg's wife later kidnaped the child involved in the custody dispute and fled the state, Graves said. She was a fugitive from April 2001 until January 2004, when she was arrested in Florida and extradited to Barton County, Mo. She then provided information that led to **Swanberg's** arrest and a federal criminal complaint being filed on March 26, 2004. That complaint was replaced by a federal indictment on April 1, 2004.

Under federal statutes, **Swanberg** could be subject to a mandatory sentence of 10 years in federal prison without parole. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard E. Monroe. It was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Barton County, Mo., Sheriff's Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow